***Update - COVID 19 - Situation in the Western Balkans***

Due to the spreading of COVID-19, all the governments are adopting very strict measures and restrictions to the freedom of movement of the population. Serbia and BiH introduced curfew, other countries restricted the movement, they shut down services, and this situation automatically impacts normal functioning of individual sectors in which workers are losing their jobs; SMEs face difficulties in functioning, which resulted in a fact that a huge number of workers staying without labour contract, and massive dismissals are expected. Small economies cannot take such the blockade in the work, trade unions are sending their demands to the governments in which they list ample matters that the governments should urgently work on to find solutions (such as establishment of special funds aimed at stimulation of employers to keep their employees or certain Social agreements between governments, employers and trade unions, or adoption of decision and decrees aimed at facilitating the survival of workers and citizens; trade unions also demand equal distribution of burden incurred by the current damages, they should not only be borne by the workers). Additional mitigations are demanded including financial aid to the most vulnerable categories of population and pensioners.

Note: Sarajevo Office is in contact with all he organisations by e-mail or phone, and we monitor situation and the flow of information; we also monitor the situation on social media networks and the TV broadcasts.

**Croatia:** Croatian Government, without any prior consultation with the trade unions, has on 24 March announced the adoption of the Law on regulation of labour rights due to the outbreak of COVID-19. In this way, they would declare null and void some of the provisions from the Croatian Labour law, and the General Collective Agreement, which would result in termination of some of the guaranteed workers’ rights. On demand of UATUC and NHS, ETUC and ITUC have promptly reacted and send the letter to the Croatian Prime minister and the Minister of labour and pension systems, and supported by the pressures of trade unions, the Government put void that Law on 27 March and promised to consult trade unions on the matters of workers’ rights in the future.

<http://www.sssh.hr/hr/vise/medunarodne-aktivnosti-73/ituc-vladi-rh-suspenzija-socijalnih-i-radnih-prava-je-jasno-krsenje-medunarodnih-ljudskih-i-radnih-standarda-4271>

<http://www.sssh.hr/hr/vise/nacionalne-aktivnosti-72/etuc-zgrozen-najavom-suspenzije-radnih-i-socijalnih-prava-hrvatskim-radnicima-poziva-vladu-rh-da-hitno-odustane-od-takve-inicijative-4269>

<http://www.sssh.hr/hr/vise/nacionalne-aktivnosti-72/obavijest-sssh-sindikalnim-povjerenicima-drugim-radnickim-predstavnicima-i-clanovima-udruzenih-sindikata-4245?fbclid=IwAR1eN6htfOmZsT564v3eFfKNGlE7ps8c3cegr5mQldMo5CsuCuM_86FkRzk>

Croatian regulations are the following:

Paid sick leave for all workers- Yes

- Worker in self isolation/quarantine due to COVID-19 unable to work - as long as in self-isolation/quarantine imposed by authorities (usually 14 days) - calculated in relation to fixed amount - covered by social security system
- Worker who is sick/infected by COVID-19 - regular sick leave until cured - 70% of the salary or more if foreseen differently by the collective agreement - first 42 days paid by the employer, after that social security system
- Sick/infected worker who was infected at work - until cured - if proved, treated as work accident, 100% of salary - covered by social security system

Wage protection for all workers- Yes
Employers can apply if:
- operating in certain industries (tourism & hospitality, transport & logistics, health tourism, garment, wood processing)
- cannot operate due to civil protection orders
- can prove special circumstances (i.e. 20% loss of income)
- Measure active as of 1.3. for a maximum of 3 months.
- Employers will be subsidized in the amount of net minimum wage per worker working full-time

Income support for platform workers, freelancers, other self-employed or informal workers - None

Provision for part-time work where necessary with no/minimal loss of income :
- Workers employed part time whose employers have applied for wage protection due to reduced economic activity due to COVID - 19 pandemic, and qualify, can receive up to half the amount of net minimum wage.
Mortgage/loan relief - Non

**Serbia:** Serbia introduced strict measures aimed at protection of population and mitigation of impacts of COVID-19, which affected economy; employers are already dismissing or announce the dismissal of workers. Trade unions actively exert pressures on the Government to prevent the massive dismissals of workers and to help the economy overcome the present situation. One positive example is an American company “Cooper Tyre” (860 workers) which operates in the city of Kruševac in Serbia – employer slightly increased the wages and provided adequate protective measures, which is the sing of social responsibility.

<https://www.ituc-csi.org/serbia-ugs-nezavisnost-action-in>

<http://www.krusevacinfo.com/americka-firma-koja-posluje-u-krusevcu-coopertires-radnicima-povecala-plate-za-vreme-vanrednog-stanja/?fbclid=IwAR3aYewc6c0pKouMjTAdoUpZiyNfbRE_fiI3xVsam-s7vcpIFtzgu9rm_DI>

Serbian regulations are the following:

Paid sick leave for all workers- Yes
- Worker who is sick/infected by COVID-19 - regular sick leave until cured - 65% of the average amount/salary received in the last 12 months . New regulation will be adopted soon.

- Sick/infected worker who was infected at work - until cured - if proved, treated as work accident, 100% of salary - covered by social security system

Wage protection for all workers- Yes

Income support for platform workers, freelancers, other self-employed or informal workers - None

Provision for part-time work where necessary with no/minimal loss of income :
- Workers employed part time whose employers have applied for wage protection due to reduced economic activity due to COVID - 19 pandemic, and qualify, can receive up to half the amount of net minimum wage.
Mortgage/loan relief – Non

**Albania:** the Govnerment has on 24 March decalred the state of national disaster. The Government has set up the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Civil Emergencies. This committee includes many other civil actors such as NGOs, business organisations, religious institutions, but unfortunately the two national confederations have not been involved. The banking system is trying to create favourable conditions for other sectors of the economy, but if the situation continues, it will continue deteriorating, as it is projected to have significant losses.

<https://www.ituc-csi.org/albania-bspsh-strategy-and>
<https://www.ituc-csi.org/albania-requirements-of-the>

Albanian regulations are the following:

Paid sick leave for all workers- Yes

- Worker in self isolation/quarantine due to COVID-19 unable to work - as long as in self-isolation/quarantine imposed by authorities - covered by State Health Fund
- Worker who is sick/infected by COVID-19 - regular sick leave until cured - 80% of the salary - first 8 days paid by the employer, after that 3 months by the State Heath Fund
- Sick/infected worker who was infected at work - until cured - if proved, treated as work accident, 95% of salary - covered by social security system.
Wage protection for all workers- ( in relation to COVID is not regulated yet)
Income support for platform workers, freelancers, other self-employed or informal workers - None
Provision for part-time work where necessary with no/minimal loss of income : not regulated yet.
Mortgage/loan relief – None

\* TUs demanded significant improvement and regulation of the issue.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**: Trade unions are actively involved in the fight for the protection of workers at their jobs, but also the protection of workers from dismissal. Although information is shared on a daily basis that some workers lost their jobs, trade unions are trying to reach and agreement with the Governments and employers on the maintenance of production, keeping workers through a special Social Agreement. FBiH Government is right now working on the adoption of following decisions: moratorium on the repayment of loans for the period of 3-6 months free of additional interests; that the employers be exempted from payment of contributions and taxes to the wages of workers during the crisis; postponement of VAT payment for legal persons. The Government of Republika Srpska is also adopting the restrictive measures, and trade unions are working actively on the protection of workers’ rights. Unfortunately, there are no measures or strategies adopted at the level of the state in relation to COVID-19.

<https://www.facebook.com/SavezsindikataR.Srpske/>

<http://savezsindikatars.org/ranka-misic-za-buku-radna-mjesta-se-moraju-sacuvati/?fbclid=IwAR1G2alwjP548hEIaQgIuvSNZrqG3mvLZbi67o8p6P94_1WUVHMxouiCd2o>

BiH regulations are the following:

Paid sick leave for all workers- Yes

- Worker in self isolation/quarantine due to COVID-19 unable to work - as long as in self-isolation/quarantine imposed by authorities - covered by State Health Fund
- Worker who is sick/infected by COVID-19 - regular sick leave until cured - 70% of the salary - first 42 days paid by the employer, after that by the State Heath Fund ( after 3 months, a special Commission of doctor are deciding for further sick leave status)
- Sick/infected worker who was infected at work - until cured - if proved, treated as work accident, 100% of salary - covered by State Health Fund
Wage protection for all workers- ( in relation to COVID is not regulated yet)
Income support for platform workers, freelancers, other self-employed or informal workers - None
Provision for part-time work where necessary with no/minimal loss of income : not regulated yet.
\* In relation to a new situation on COVID – 19, TUs demanded significant improvement and regulation of the issue.

**Montenegro:** Trade unions are working actively on the protection of workers’ rights, and they keep sending their demands to the Government. Trade unions expect that the Government will keep its promise – Prime minister has on 29 March stated the following: **“***All the economies in the world are endangered without exception, even ours, but the state has the strength and potential, financial and institutional to provide protection and security to every citizen and his family. The Government is working on a new package of support for citizens and the economy. That is why I have a message for all employers: Refrain from lying off workers, save our employees. By keeping an employee, we safeguard the person as the most valuable resource. The Government of Montenegro has also made the decision and started paying one-off aid to all pensioners”.*

<https://www.sindikat.me/index.php/28-vijesti/272-sscg-donirao-10-000-eura-nacionalnom-koordinacionom-tijelu-za-zarazne-bolesti>

<http://usscg.me/2020/03/26/usscg-predlozila-vladi-crne-gore-formiranje-ad-hock-komisije-za-razmatranje-i-dodjelu-kredita-privrednicima/>

<http://usscg.me/2020/03/27/usscg-zahtijeva-da-se-sars-cov2-covid-19-podzakonskim-aktima-definise-kao-karantinska-bolest-2/>

Montenegro - regulations are the following:

Paid sick leave for all workers- Yes
- Worker who is sick/infected by COVID-19 - regular sick leave until cured - 70% of the salary - first 60 days paid by the employer, after that by the State Heath Fund.

- Sick/infected worker who was infected at work - until cured - if proved, treated as work accident, 100% of salary - covered by State Health Fund
Wage protection for all workers- ( in relation to COVID is not regulated yet)
Income support for platform workers, freelancers, other self-employed or informal workers - None
Provision for part-time work where necessary with no/minimal loss of income : not regulated yet.
\* In relation to a new situation on COVID – 19, TUs demanded significant improvement and regulation of the issue.

**Macedonia:** Trade unions, CCM and KSS Macedonia actively send their demands to the Government to protect workers and citizens, to protect the status of workers, including economy, which may face a full collapse.

<http://www.ssm.org.mk/en/emergent-measures-stop-layoffs>

<https://kss.mk/>

**Kosovo:** The Government decided to give some benefits for Health and Police workers who has to work these days on full time, so despite their salaries they will get and amount of 300 Euros more for the great job they are doing.  Kosovo Government decided to help the private sector - they will give each worker an amount of 170 Euros (an amount of minimum wage in Kosovo) since many SME has closed and employers couldn’t pay salaries to their workers, since in the actual situation they didn’t have profit. Social assistant beneficiaries have also get increase and they receive their payments in advance.

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